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# Canada's Role in Science and Technology for Development

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## The Inter-University Council in Great Britain

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*Richard Griffiths,  
IUC*

My task is to tell you about the work of IUC in the application of science and technology for overseas development. IUC is a small body, narrowly focused on universities overseas; thus it impinges on only a small part — although perhaps an important part — of the scope of this symposium. I hasten to add that what I have to say carries with it no suggestion that I'm trying to persuade Canada to do likewise. For this would be contrary to the basic principle on which IUC operates, that each country and each institution in each country with whom we deal should do its own thinking and take its own decisions about its problems, and that IUC's sole objective is to assist them, if they wish us to, in this process. And we do so by making available to them such

relevant experience and skills as they believe, rightly or wrongly, that we can provide. I like to think that we share this philosophy with IDRC and with the Netherlands Universities Foundation for International Cooperation (NUFFIC), and that we will shortly be joined in this by the proposed new United States organization, the Institute for Scientific and Technological Cooperation (ISTC).

We were reminded on Thursday when we arrived that both this symposium and the Vienna conference will be judged, not by the words spoken or written, which will be many, but by whether useful action emerges. Well, IUC is an action agency. It is a facilitating agency. In scientific terms it's a catalyst. Its work is administrative. I make no apology for claiming it to be administrative because I believe the administrative profession, to which I have belonged all my life, is as respectable as the academic profession. And, indeed, I am reminded of the words of Lord Haldane in the Machinery of Government Report of 1918, when he said: "The process of administration is the conscious application of thought as preliminary to action." If action is not involved, then it's not the administrator's job to spend time thinking about it: that's the academic's job. We are concerned with action. Not for IUC, therefore, is the luxury that many were indulging in yesterday of creating a science policy and discussing technology policy. Even we know that policy implementation is far more difficult than policy-making.

IUC, we like to think, has no policy but has a very clear objective through which every single thing that we do can be judged by anybody who wants to judge us. IUC's objective, as a legally independent body governed by British universities and polytechnical institutes collectively and financed wholly, except for any consultancy earnings from outside bodies, by the British Ministry of Overseas Development, is to foster higher education overseas and, to this end,

arrange interuniversity cooperation between British institutions and those in certain developing countries. We have no other purpose. We do not exist to benefit British universities, although we might do so incidentally — indeed, we must, if we are to secure their cooperation, ensure some academic benefit and job satisfaction. They make no money from us, nor do the people who participate in our programs. IUC was brought into existence to exploit the common ground that exists between government aid policies and the historic and ongoing desire of British universities and their staffs to continue and extend their involvement in higher education overseas.

It has not been easy to hold this common ground against invaders — invaders from the ministry's in-house advisers, invaders from the British Council — and, in fact, the common ground is changing, just as the needs of overseas universities have changed over the years; but we have survived, and I hope we will continue to do so for a long time. A very illuminating remark was made yesterday by W. J. Jenkins of CIDA. He, you may remember, was telling us that CIDA has no in-house academic research capacity — nor does IDRC — and that if such skills are needed, CIDA goes out and buys them. I suggest that this is the wrong approach. The tasks we are all concerned with require, for operational success, money, which usually has to come from our government, and people in science, who usually come from our universities. Unless both the government's overseas policy interests and the academic research and human interests of our staff are simultaneously engaged there is a grave danger of either doing the wrong thing or, worse, doing the right thing in the wrong way. We all remember the old adage: "It's not what you do; it's the way you do it."

This is profoundly true in the whole of international relations we are talking about this morning. People are more important than money — and I speak as an ex-Treasury official for 20 years, to whom money and its proper use are serious problems. In the piece of machinery that is IUC, money is the lubricant, not the fuel. People are the source of the energy, and the power they provide is directly related to the degree of their personal and institutional involvement and not to the amount of money they earn from doing it. Nobody, not even the British Ministry of Overseas Development or the Treasury, wants individuals or institutions out of pocket as a result of their involvement in the transfer of science and technology to developing countries. But they must not be in the game for money. They must be doing it because they believe in it and get academic and personal reward from doing it.

Similarly, because they are a combined operation, IUC activities are predicated on the existence of overseas institutions that both need and want the help we can offer in carrying out their functions, and their functions are those of serving their community in all the ways that universities are expected and wish to serve. But IUC operations also invariably require a local input of both people and money, and this the overseas institution is always, in our experience, willing, anxious, and proud to provide. Poor institutions often find it hard, even impossible, to resist charity in the form of fully funded overseas experts, either individuals or teams. But they always much prefer that these experts join them in their institutions as equal colleagues.

What does all this amount to in practice? Let me list just a few points. At the request of overseas institutions with which we are associated, we will seek and, we hope, find a British or non-British staff member to fill, at a local salary, any vacant post in their establishment without any regard for what the post is. If they want a philosopher we'll find them a philosopher. But that, of course, is not the end of the story. We do this by open advertisement and, when necessary, head-

hunting among British universities and polytechnical institutes. Being a university-based body in constant contact with every one of the institutions in Britain, we are in a reasonably good position to do that. All our management committees are composed of university people from Britain, so we have a considerable amount of access to the people who might know where the right people can be found. We tend to boast, quite untruly, that we can in three telephone calls locate anybody who's available in the British university system to undertake any given post overseas if the conditions are right.

We will also, up to a preordained limit of numbers of posts in each institution, provide or arrange salary supplements and other benefits as necessary to persuade British — but not, alas, non-British — staff to accept a particular post. The man or woman is, of course, appointed to that post not by IUC but by the overseas institution, and the only formal contract is with that institution. If the individual comes from a British institution, we expect — and indeed press — the institution to let him or her go for at least 2 years without pay but with a return ticket to the job and salary increments, with seniority unimpaired. Continuing superannuation needs also to be looked after, and we can do that. But all this must be done without cost to the British institution. Sometimes the university needs a little more than gentle persuasion from their vice-chancellor, who is a member of our governing body, or from me, or from my colleagues in the office. And sometimes we have to do what always works with universities — resort to a little bribe.

We are reluctant to act on proposals that come to us from British universities. They're not the bodies that ought to be making the proposals. But if one of them, from its continuing knowledge of an overseas institution, comes up with a proposal, then all three parties — IUC and both universities — try to get together to form a link that is nothing more than a grouping of all the services we offer. It may well be that the overseas institution doesn't want staff members but short-term visitors for consultancy, curriculum review, research participation, or something else — it's entirely up to the institution. Then we send visitors for a short term — not less than 4 weeks but not more than 4 months. These visitors are a very useful bunch: they teach when necessary, they do research, and they do consultancies.

The British universities are expected to keep the visitors on salary while they are gone. If they don't, we lean on them and force them to. If they won't, then we won't send the individual. The vice-chancellor then has to face his colleagues on the governing body of IUC when they next meet and report that the university wouldn't let the short-term visitor go. The overseas universities select the short-term visitors or else specify the requirement and let us do the selecting. The overseas university is expected to treat the visitors as guests in their own home. In other words, the overseas university has to pay board and lodging and transport. There are no exceptions. This enables them to say that they don't want the visitor if, as occasionally occurs, an importunate academic who has a daughter teaching in Zambia wants to visit her over his vacation. If the overseas university officials want to get out of that situation, all they have to say is: "Sorry, at the moment we can't afford to play our part." Similarly, we don't give the visitors consultancy fees; we simply pay the additional costs, which include return fare and pocket money. There is no question of the visitors making money out of it, and no question of a commercial consultancy fee being paid even to a management consultant, whom we have occasionally lost for that very reason.

Simultaneously, we have an inflow of people from the staff or potential staff of developing countries for what we call local staff development and training. They can be academic staff, librarians, administrators, or technicians. They can be placed in standard courses in British universities or in so-called run off courses arranged with a particular British university especially for them. They can even complete part of the requirements for a higher degree from an overseas university in Britain.

There is no need in our operations to involve the governments at either end. But, of course, care has to be taken by the overseas university, by ourselves, and by the British university to see that we avoid damaging any interests that the overseas university or the overseas government or the British government might have. Briefing is very important. The links we have heard a lot about are merely combinations of all the services we offer. If British staff going abroad for a long or a short term need books or equipment that they cannot find in the overseas institution we will, as we call it, "clothe them" with the necessary books and equipment. It doesn't mean equipping the whole science lab of the university: it simply means that we are giving them the equipment that our people need to do their job in the overseas university as a colleague. If, for example, they want photocopies of articles and foreign exchange considerations are a problem, then we put £100, which works miracles, to their credit at the British lending library. All they have to do is send a voucher, and the extract from the learned journal goes out by return post, and the cost is logged against the credit they have. This saves months of effort at an overseas university.

Finally, let me confess that although, as you can see, I am proud of IUC's operation and have had enormous satisfaction from my work in it, I am not claiming that it is perfect. It seeks to do no more than to be a catalyst, and I would like to see some changes in the emphasis that we have. We are still constrained by the requirements of both our paymasters and our managers, the British universities. But I wouldn't wish to have any other job.

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